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A House system is planned for Cypress Junior College, California, for an expected enrollment of 12,000. This idea of a residence hall where students live and work together may be organized around a major field (science, engineering, arts) or for a deliberate interdisciplinary mix. Usually a House plan brings living and learning together to complement each other, but a commuter college like Cypress must organize its Houses without benefit of dormitory life. The plan is intended, in these days of large enrollment, to minimize the impersonality of a "punch card" campus and the sense of alienation that exacerbates current student revolt. Each House will be in a major building (vocational technical, fine arts, library, business, humanities, sciences, physical education), near the entrance for easy access and prevention of interference with classes. It will be a complete student center and, depending on size and interest, will include food services, lounges, library reference and browsing material, seminar rooms, study areas, possibly audio-tutorial systems, a House manager, student government offices, space for leisure-time activities (music, sports), bookstore, and barbershop. House spirit and pride will be achieved by participation in House government, social and cultural activities, vocational and personal counseling, and the chance to enjoy diverse opportunities. A few disadvantages are anticipated, but it is felt they will be solved without great difficulty. (HH)

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THE HOUSE PLAN AT CYPRESS

By Daniel G. Walker
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When I was a boy attending Eltham College, a public school near London, England, I remember vividly being a member of Livingston House, one of several such Houses named after prominent English missionaries. There was Livingston House. There was Chalmers House. There was Moffat House, and others. Each House had its own blazer, its own school tie, its own emblems, its own prefects and monitors. Various kinds of instructional and cocurricular services (words, by the way, which had never been heard of in England at the time) were organized along the lines of the House structure. And, of course, the basic ingredient of the House system was the residence hall. All the House members lived in the same dormitory and so came to know each other intimately, as well as the House advisor assigned to the dormitory. (The latter was universally hated, incidentally, since he was the symbol of the austere, unbending, aristocratic authority of the English headmaster.)

Throughout the ages, colleges and universities in the United States, in England, and elsewhere have experimented with and actually developed what can be referred to as "House" Plans. Many examples are extant today, such as those at Stephens College, the University of Pittsburgh the University of California at Santa Cruz, the Claremont Colleges, Michigan State University, Rutgers University, and the University of the Pacific.

Without exception, however, the House plan has as its chief ingredient, or raison d'être, the concept of the residence hall or dormitory in which students live, work, and study together. These residence halls may be based upon a major

field, such as a Science House, an Engineering House, a Fine Arts House, or a Social Sciences House, usually acquiring some name associated with the discipline, the university, benefactors of the college, or some such source. Or the House Plan may be based on some other pattern of organization involving student "mix." That is to say, students from many majors may be found in the same House, thus giving the House an interdisciplinary complexion. In any event, regardless of the basis for organization of the House, the sine qua non of the House Plan as it exists throughout the nation in higher education is the residence hall. All other factors, such as instructional facilities and materials, special services, eating facilities, cultural events, and organizations and activities are predicated in such cases on the residence hall as the basic unit. And indeed, where students live in, this makes a great deal of sense.

I refer to the definition of the House Plan contained in the 111-page report on the House Plan at Stephens College written by Ralph C. Leyden, "The House Plan is a method of organizing a program of instruction so as to bring living and learning into closer relationship and to heighten their complementary aspects." This definition is typical and, for these colleges and universities in question, quite defensible and appropriate.

The question I would like to ask then is this, "What happens if we take the word 'living' out of this definition?" Or to put it another way, "Can there be a House Plan without what has heretofore been the chief ingredient, the concept of the residence hall, or dormitory?" Can the House Plan be introduced to the junior college, especially the Commuter College, with no residence halls whatever? Or is the House Plan irrelevant for public junior colleges? We at Cypress Junior College believe it can be applied to the Commuter College and are currently building our campus for an eventual enrollment of 12,000 students on

the presumption that the House Plan can and will be implemented. At the outset, let me state that it will take two or three years to prove our point -- or have it disproved. But perhaps we can share some of our dreams and some of the rationale for the belief that the House Plan can be introduced successfully into the junior colleges, even in large metropolitan areas such as Orange County, California.

One might ask, "Why a House Plan at the Junior College level?" The answer lies in the staggering figure just mentioned -- 12,000 students. I could cite a number of leaders in the junior college movement who have stated previously what their concept of the ideal size for a junior college was. Twenty years ago, they were talking about 1000-2000 students; ten years ago, this figure had climbed to 3000-4000; nowadays, you hear 5000-8000. Like everything else, the figure keeps escalating, and for very good reasons. The booming population, the advent of megalopolis, the high cost of land and construction, recent developments in adapting technological advances to instructional media, all have created pressures for expanding and enlarging the junior colleges. Friends from other parts of the country find it hard to believe that the land on which Cypress Junior College sits cost $40,000 an acre. At this going price in suburbia, boards of trustees cannot afford the luxury of several smaller colleges distributed widely throughout the district. The megalocampus is upon us. We can bemoan it; we can resist it; we can decry it; but we cannot avoid it. Therefore, we should try to do something about it.

It doesn't take a seer to predict the disenchantment of the students generally with megalocampus. All too often we have heard the students express their dismay and bitterness over the depersonalization and dehumanization of the IBM college. I recall with some humor the remark our registrar made to a student who had lost his Number Six Student Identification Card. "Young man," he said, "I have some

reason to believe that you just don't exist!" While said in jest, I would imagine that many students today wonder if anyone cares whether they do exist, or whether they are just numbers in a staggering array of enrollment reports and computer-compiled statistics.

We are obviously facing a student revolution of sorts, Berkeley being perhaps the most publicized example. Megalocampus is not the only reason. Disenchantment with today's world of war, violence, exploitation, racial injustice, middle class values, or whatever is part of the problem. But megalocampus exacerbates the rejection. It offers little in the way of an alternative, little in the way of encouraging more creative, constructive remedies to society's ills. It almost defies the student to learn, to enjoy the educational environment, to become a real part of it. The bulletin board in front of the administration building might very well read, "We Dare You To Get An Education!" And, heaven help us, the vast armies of bodies lined up in front of the admissions building at registration time don't make this job easy for any of us. And the fact that only a quarter of them are still there at graduation time tells us that we have failed.

I don't think anyone will deny the problem. But what is the solution? Perhaps there isn't one. I'd hate to resign myself to that conclusion. We are compelled to seek out solutions. Independent study, credit by examination, programmed instruction, audio-tutorial systems, sensoriums, personal assistance groups, are all efforts in that direction. At Cypress we are planning to introduce the House Plan as another attempt to make learning at megalocampus more meaningful, more individualized, more challenging, more rewarding, and basically more personal.

When Cypress Junior College was first conceived, in late 1965, the vexing problems that would accompany an ultimate size of 12,000 students were perceived. The board selected Caudill, Rowlett, and Scott of Houston, Texas, and Blurock and Associates of Orange County as associated architects and asked them to think through the problems of the megalocampus and make some suggestions and recommendations for making Cypress more than just an enormous airplane hangar with parking lots and classrooms. Meetings, called "squatter sessions," were held with the architects, the newly employed administrators at Cypress Junior College, and the North Orange County Junior College District staff members in early 1966. Out of these meetings emerged the germ of the idea of the incorporation of the House Plan at Cypress. The apparent problems were discussed -- the question of the applicability of the House Plan without residence halls, the advantages and disadvantages of the system, and the various ways in which it could be implemented from both an instructional and a constructional standpoint. After many such meetings the idea began to germinate; and the new buildings, which are being erected while I write this article, reflect the concepts that were agreed upon during these workshops. However the buildings are only part of it -- the rest is up to us -- administration, faculty, and students. The ideas are not all in, but those that are, I would like to mention. We are still busily engaged in formulating our plans for our first encounter with the real thing next year.

Basically the key to the House Plan is decentralization. We move from the assumption that bigness while having the possible advantages of economy and efficiency -- and these are debateable -- is at the same time stifling, oppressive, and threatening. It suffocates the goals of individualized, personal attention for students, and it vitiates against effective learning by tending to make it sterotyped, unmanageable, and impersonal. Class sizes become ludicrous. Most

faculty members couldn't name you more than a mere handful of students and, likely as not, barely know each other -- this through no fault of their own. The desirable feelings of school identity, mutual respect, and affection on the part of students and faculty are weakened, if not entirely eliminated. Alienation and resignation often result, or the student just chucks it and drops out. But perhaps we can cope with bigness. Perhaps we can decentralize some of the typical college spaces and services and at least come to terms with bigness and avoid or minimize some of its attendant pitfalls.

Let us look at decentralization from two major standpoints -- constructional and personal -- and, needless to say, they interrelate closely.

From a constructional standpoint, there will be a House in each major building erected on the campus. In the first phase of the campus, going up now, there will be three Houses, one in the vocational-technical building, one in the fine arts building, and one in the library building. Eventually there will be a total of seven or eight Houses when the final campus is completed, including Houses in the business education building, the sciences building, the humanities building, and possibly one in the physical education building. These Houses will be positioned at the "pedestrian nodes" of each building, or, in laymen's terms, at or near the main entrance where they will be easily accessible to students and where they will not interfere with, or interrupt the proceedings in, the other more conventional instructional areas.

Each House, architecturally speaking, will not be just a self-contained student center, but far more than that. It will include decentralized food services, such as snack bars, pastry shops, continental cafes, etc., instead of the

usual huge student cafeteria. Each food service area will be individualized and represent a different theme. The first three Houses, for example, will contain variously a Danish pastry-shop theme, a Mexican theme, and an American snack-bar theme. Others will be developed later. Such possibilities as Spanish-American (Old Mexico), Old Vienna, Chinese, Hawaiian, Polynesian, African, Middle-East, Old West American, Space Age, etc., have been considered.

In addition to food services, the House will include decentralized lounge and relaxation areas. Each building will have a roomy, attractive lounge area for casual conversation, bull sessions, study, relaxation, and eating. It will provide an incentive for students to get together and get to know each other and a place where they will be able to meet and talk to faculty members, counselors, and their House advisor. Each lounge area will carry the central theme of the House as displayed in the food service area.

The House area will also have decentralized library services. In this case, there will be no attempt made to duplicate the central library -- an impossible and undesirable task. But each House will have a browsing, or reading, room. A reading shelf of important books related to the discipline of the House itself will be included, for example the Vocational-Technical House would include a number of reference books on vocational and technical subjects as well as an assortment of paperbacks and periodicals.

Study areas will be diversified throughout the House system. Each House will have seminar rooms, open study areas, and some individual carrels immediately adjacent. The possibilities for combining various types of independent study and audio-tutorial systems, such as closed-circuit TV, within this construct are unlimited. Someday as resources and planning permit, it should be quite possible

for students to tune in to a certain course or program while in a House carrel without necessarily going to the main library or laboratory for this purpose.

Faculty, counseling, and advisement offices will be located in each House. Rather than a distinct "faculty row" isolated from the campus or monolithic guidance and counseling center, faculty members within that discipline and counselors catering to that discipline will be located right there in the House and will become a significant part of it, both formally and informally. A House "advisor" will also have his office in the area, and to him will be entrusted the management, development, and spirit of the House. His role will combine counseling responsibilities and House administration, the latter with student participation of course.

Another aspect of the House will be the decentralization of student activities and student government. Student officers will have office spaces and workrooms in the Houses. The House system will probably alter the current organizational structure of student government. Most likely the current student government will cease to be an "all-college" government but instead will be decentralized on a House basis. There will probably be a House president, secretary, treasurer, etc., and then a larger All College Council with representation from each House. Activities, too, can be decentralized. Clubs, societies, intramural athletics, contests, and events can be conducted on a House basis as well as an all-college basis, depending on interest, size, and circumstance. Essential student services may also be decentralized to the House as the campus grows, including such things as bookstore services, display and exhibit spaces, and possibly even program-connected outlets for such services as cosmetology, barbershops, and merchandising in general.

As these several types of college services are decentralized to the Houses, a consistent effort will be made to ensure that these Houses are compatible, attractive, comfortable, roomy, pleasant, and inviting. We want the House to be a home -- something the student will appreciate and enjoy. Perhaps in this way the total college experience will be more worthwhile and enlivening, as well as productive and educationally profitable. The architect's conceptualizations of how the House will appear are included for the reader's perusal.

In a way the constructional or architectural aspects of the House Plan are the easiest to solve. Once agreed upon they can be built -- and at Cypress are being built. It is fairly obvious that they will be used in any event. Students are going to eat. They are going to lounge, socialize, and browse. They are even going to study. But we hope for more from the House Plan at Cypress than just providing spaces in each building for students to do these things, as desirable an end as this might be in itself. We want the House at once to be something more personal, more identifiable, more meaningful to students than just extra space. This is where the personal aspects of the House Plan take form, and quite admittedly, these personal aspects are the ones to which we will be addressing ourselves all year long. They require a great deal of reflection and planning. We will be involving administration, faculty, students, and a special House Committee in planning for the implementation of the House Plan next year.

The first personal ingredient of the House Plan is membership. In a college with residence halls, this is easy. Your House is where you sleep. At a commuter college, any such membership will have to be accomplished through some other system. We have toyed first with the idea of random House assignment at registration; secondly, with student selection of House at time of registration based upon major or vocational goals; and even with the idea of no specific membership.

letting a student be an informal member of any House where he enjoys participating. I would say that the prevailing mood is to have students select their House on entering the College, based upon major or vocational choice, since most of their time would be spent in that building in which their major field was being taught and therefore would be immediately adjacent to that House.

The second personal ingredient of the House Plan is organization. Accepting the premise of membership, then membership will have to mean something. For example, each House could have its own student government and its own student officers. Elections could be held in each House. The House "Council" could be responsible for recommending policy and procedures for the administration of the food services, the activities and clubs within the House, intramurals and contests, bringing in speakers, films, or programs, administering a portion of the student body budget as it related to their House, and so on. It could duplicate, on a smaller basis within each House, what the All College Student Council performs now. Also, as mentioned earlier, each House could have a House advisor, responsible for the overall supervision and guidance of the House, working closely with students and faculty within the House. He could be an advisor-counselor, directly under the Dean of Students. Quite often, all the House advisors from the total college could meet with the dean to discuss common problems and to work towards improving the House program. Correspondingly, representatives from the House councils could meet together for an All College Council of presidents or something similar. Regular counselors could also have their offices in each House serving the students of that House as a House counselor. If each House has an expected enrollment of 1200-1500, then three or four counselors assigned to that House could preserve the current ratio of 1:400. This makes sense also if the Houses are related to major fields, since these counselors would be experts in that particular major field.

The third personal ingredient of the House Plan is spirit. By this I mean the idea of belonging, of participating, of House pride, of attachment. Granted this will vary from individual to individual, but at least we want to foster the spirit of House identity and in so doing believe that we will not lose the greater identity with Cypress Junior College itself. In fact we trust this will enhance it. "Spirit" can only be gained through meaningful and memorable experiences. These experiences can include instructional, cocurricular, and social events through the offering of a diverse series of programs and services. Instructionally, the House can provide the opportunity for independent study and audio-tutorial programming; it can provide the opportunity for dialog and discourse with faculty, counselors, and advisors; it can provide the opportunity of seminars, personal attention groups similar to those established at Mount San Antonio College, film showings, lectures, skits, book reviews, debates, discussion clubs, exhibits, and performances of various kinds. From a cocurricular standpoint, it can include House clubs and organizations, intramural sports conducted between House teams, dances and social activities of one kind or another, inter-house debates and contests, for example, a "Miss House" contest or a creative writing contest. All of these possibilities can effectively engender that elusive and ambiguous phenomenon, "spirit of place," and provide an environment where House membership will actually stand for something meaningful and important in the lives of students. Apart from the activities and services, House spirit may also be enhanced by the material or physical symbols of House membership, such as insignia, ties, blazers, pins, rings, etc., though the advantages and liabilities of this possibility are still being debated.

Can it work? There are many problems, and I have touched on a few of these already. Apart from the aggravating questions of membership, role, implementation, philosophy, and resistance on the part of some people to anything new, there are

some acute questions that are worthy of real debate. What do we do with the many "undecided" students who express no known major on entry -- assign them arbitrarily? If a student changes his major, does he then change Houses? What do we do with our ever increasing number of extended day students -- ignore them insofar as the House Plan is concerned? Is there a possibility that the Houses will develop "personalities" where one is the elite and the other the educational equivalent of skid row? How do we avoid some of the less desirable excesses of the college fraternity? In trying to achieve personalization and individualization, is there a chance we may wrack the college with divisive factions instead of binding it together with complementary segments of a unified team? These problems or concerns cannot be disregarded, but compared with the alternative -- megalocampus -- we feel they are worth facing and worth challenging.

Can it work? We don't know. We intend to find out. Check with us in a couple of years. By then we will have some of the answers.

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